(c) whether the aim of the project was to bring these kids at par with the children of middle class families; and

(d) if so, what are the main reasons for not implementing the child welfare project, effectively?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT [DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA]: (a) to (d) There is no such programme being run under the aegis of UNDP. However, Centrally Sponsored Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) Scheme, launched in 1975, which aims at holistic development of children below 6 years and pregnant women and nursing mothers by providing a package of services comprising supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-up, referral services and nutrition and health education and non-formal education is being implemented through State Governments.

As on 30.9.2002, about 332 lakh children, are covered under the Scheme.

The reports received from States do not indicate that the implementation of this Scheme has been affected due to official apathy.

Pre-Harappan civilization

2465. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Institute of Ocean Technology had indicated a likely Pre-Harappan civilization;

(b) if so, what is the basis for the exploration; and

(c) what further steps have been taken to conduct research in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) and (b) The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai of the Department of Ocean Development (DOD) Government of India had during the course of under water surveys in the Gulf of Cambay, Gujarat during Cctober, 2000 to March, 2001 come across a stretch of formations typical of a riverine regime in the middle of the sea at 30—40 m. water depth. An area of almost 9km. Stretch west of Hazira in Gujarat appeared to be lined with well laid house basement like feature

partially covered by sand waves and sand ripples. The Side Scan Sonar deployed for the survey picked up images which indicate several geometric objects that are normally man made.

During subsequent surveys in November-December, 2001 various objects were picked up from the sea bed. Among the objects collected, the carbonized wood pieces were taken up for dating using C_{14} technique in the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeo Botany, Lucknow and in National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad. The preliminary results reveal that the age of the wood samples dated back to 7500 B.C. This has been further substantiated by dating carried out at laboratories in Germany.

These results and some of the objects collected were made public in a Press Conference on 16th January, 2002. Further detailed surveys, studies and investigations would need to be done in the area by multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional teams to conclusively establish the period of settlement.

(c) As a follow up, a workshop was organized on 1st July 2002 at NIOT campus, Chennai which was attended by about 50 eminent personalities belonging to different fields like archaeology, geology, geo-morphology, geo-chronology and marine technology. Based on the recommendations in the workshop, several organisations and institutions were asked to give proposal pertaining to the expertise that will be of importance to the gulf of Cambay marine archeological findings.

Statutory status for CRS

2466. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Commissioners of Railway Safety, who conduct inquiries into major rail accidents, cannot function independently and impartially, as they are dependent on the Ministry of Railways for all their important requirements, like office and residential accommodation, transport and other perks for their officers, as well as for submitting their findings on accidents to the Railway board;

(b) if so, the details of the review undertaken, if any, to ensure an independent statutory authority status for the Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety; and